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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002257

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NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER
DS/OP/AF

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#) [ZCTU](#)
SUBJECT: ZCTU LEADERS, DEMONSTRATORS ARRESTED IN ADVANCE OF
PLANNED MARCH

REF: HARARE 2246

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

1. (C) SUMMARY: On November 18, police arrested 9 members of the ZCTU governing body, and about forty-five civil society leaders and ZCTU members nationwide in advance of a ZCTU planned demonstration. There were credible reports that WOZA Director Jenni Williams was severely beaten during arrest, but police presence on the streets of Harare was lighter than usual for such an event. The GOZ appears, as in the past, determined to quash any public expression of opposition. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) On November 18, at about 10:30 a.m. riot police stormed a demonstration (Ref) planning meeting at the Quality International Hotel in Harare of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) general council. Of the thirty-five-member body, nine were arrested including Secretary General Wellington Chibebe, President Lovemore

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Matongo, Deputy Secretary General Collen Gwiyo, and Secretary General of the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) Raymond Majongwe. According to Mlamleli Sibanda, ZCTU Information Officer, police did not mistreat any of the arrestees.

3. (U) On the same day at about 1:00 p.m. police in Harare arrested about thirty people who were gathered to participate in a ZCTU march against high taxation and deteriorating economic conditions. Among those arrested were John Makumbe, Director of Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ), Brian Raftopolous, Director of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Lovemore Madhuku, Director of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Janah Ncube, Director of the Women in Parliament Support Unit (WIPSU), and Mike Davies, Chairman of the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA). The remaining arrestees were mostly ZCTU members. Speaking on his cell phone from custody at Harare Central Police Station, Raftopolous said they had gathered near Town House to begin the planned march to the Ministry of Finance. Immediately as they began to march, police arrested them. Raftopolous said police had not mistreated them.

4. (C) The sister of Jenni Williams, Director of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), told the DCM that police arrested Williams in Bulawayo and beat her severely. Williams, distraught but able to get a cell phone call out to her sister, said several other WOZA members were arrested with her as they gathered to march on November 18; some of the others were also beaten. (Note: Attempts to contact Williams directly have been futile. End Note).

5. (C) Sibanda said that as workers gathered to march in Bulawayo, a police truck arrived and riot police jumped out and started beating would-be demonstrators. The workers fled, one person ran into the street, was hit by a passing vehicle, and was severely injured.

6. (C) Sibanda said that on the morning of November 18, police also arrested seven ZCTU members in Gweru, and one each in Victoria Falls, Gwanda, and Bulawayo. Gebre Gebremariam, Zimbabwe Representative of the Solidarity Center said that the goal was to force police to arrest them as a sign of protest, and that now their intention was to get out of jail and do the same thing next week.

7. (U) On November 17, SAPA carried a statement by COSATU supporting the planned ZCTU demonstration and calling on the GOZ not to interfere with the ZCTU's bona fide trade union activities and to let the workers of Zimbabwe express their feelings over economic hardships. Sibanda said that CTUC and ICFTU had also issued statements in solidarity with the planned march.

8. (C) Emboffs toured around downtown Harare during the time when the demonstration was supposed to start and spoke directly with several gathered who were later arrested.

Emboffs observed not more than forty people gathered near Town House for the planned march. Police presence was less than for previous similar events. Groups of three to four officers could be seen patrolling near the planned gathering area, and in Africa Unity Square, some with batons. MDC Secretary for Economic Affairs Tendayi Biti said that he

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expected the turnout to be low due to lapses in planning and communication.

COMMENT:

19. (C) Although the ZCTU had hoped the general populace would respond to its call to march, the turnout in Harare at least appeared to be largely symbolic. As usual, police were not afraid to preemptively arrest leaders and break-up a very modest march in its earliest stage - demonstrating that the GOZ has no intention of allowing any public expression of opposition.

SULLIVAN